



It takes a lot of team effort to pull off an event like the 12 Hours of Pont De Vaux. This joint British/American effort has dominated past races but this year they come up short and took a hard-earned fifth place overall.

# PONT DE VAUX BANSHEE

Swan song for the Yamaha twin cylinder two-stroke

By the Dirt Wheels two-strokes

Yamaha's Banshee ceased production in 2006. With this last production run, the legendary twin-cylinder screamer ended its reign as the last of the high performance two-stroke ATVs. Sure, there are a few holdouts, here and there, but the good 'ol days of rocketship, high revving two-stroke engines have come and gone.

### EUROPE'S LAST GASP

Our good buddies in Europe, though, are giving the Banshee a farewell send off. America's Duncan

Racing and England's ATV World got together to sponsor Doug Eichner and John Mitchell aboard the very machine that won the 2004 and 2005 Pont De Vaux 12 Hour endurance races in France.

The machine that Doug and John would be riding was an updated, gold and black plated beauty that the two would compete with in this legendary French ATV quad race. Up to 120 teams compete at the same time on the same three-mile course.

Riders post qualifying times to determine who lines up closest to the Grand Prix style starting line. Three separate four-hour races are run, and then the points are tabulated to determine an overall winner.

What makes Pont De Vaux unique, though, is its festive atmosphere and the riders parade held the day before the race in the nearby town of Macon, France. The locals all get into the event and huge crowds line the city's streets to cheer on the various teams.

There is even a carnival in the infield with kiddie and adult rides and lots of concession stands. This year marked the 20th anniversary of the race and unfortunately a rain storm muddied up the track prior to the first moto start.

"Since this was the 20th anniversary of the race, we thought it was a good time to retire the Banshee from competition over here," stated Duncan Racing owner Loren Duncan. "The four-strokes have gotten so fast, and they're so much easier to ride, that they're the machine to beat over there now. We will continue to race this event, with the co-sponsorship of England's ATV World, but we will be building four-strokes to compete with from here on out," says Loren.

### READY TO RACE

"I've raced this machine (Banshee) for over ten years now," says Doug Eichner. "We certainly have it dialed in for this event. We know what it takes to make the Banshee work over there. A good pit strategy is essential at this race and Loren and Martin (the owner of ATV World) did a great job of making the quad look really good with its black and gold color scheme.

"Reliability is a key to doing well at Pont De Vaux," says Eichner. "Martin Fletcher, at ATV World, goes completely through the machine and details it before every race. We use a Laeger complete chassis, A-arms, swingarms, etc. It is a lot stronger than stock and holds up to abuse well. A Honda CR500 linkage is run on the Elka shocks we use over there.

That seems to work well on the Banshee. We also run a Suzuki 500 rear axle which is modified to fit on the Laeger rear swingarm. The jumps are not real big but the landings are kind of on flat ground. A durable rear axle is a must for racing there.

"A heavy-duty chain is also a good idea. We run a much larger 530 chain on our race quad. We run a larger motorcycle style caliper off a road bike on the machine to get a bit better braking as well. The top speed for our Banshee down the front straight is right around 95-96 mph. The average speed around the track is right around 55-56 mph. It's flat out the entire time you're out there. It's a fast track.

"The toughest thing about racing Pont De Vaux is that you have 119



Having already won PDV a record seven times '06 was to be the last time the Duncan Racing/ATV World team were going to officially use a Yamaha Banshee at this level of racing in the prestigious event.

The Duncan Racing/ATV World Banshee would see its last outing at the '06 running of Pont De Vaux in the hands of the winners of PDV for the last two years, Doug Eichner and John Mitchell.

#### MACHINE SPEC SHEET:



**Model...**2006 Yamaha Banshee  
**Motor Mods...**Duncan Racing  
**Engine type...**2-Stroke twin cylinder  
**Displacement...**350cc  
**Bore & stroke...**64mm x 54mm  
**Carburetion...**Dual Keihin 34mm PJ Carbs with PYRAMID Reed Valves  
**Starting...**Kick  
**Transmission type/oil...**Maxima MTL 85w  
**Final drive (chain and brand)...**DID 530  
**O-Ring** 16x37  
**Fuel tank and capacity...**IMS 21 liter  
**Fuel used...**VP C12 with Maxima 927 32-1  
**Exhaust system...**Paul Turner Racing  
**Exhaust...**Pipe and Fat Boy 2 Silencer  
**Air intake & filter...**ProTech UK ATV alloy w/Pro Design Pro Flow & K&N filter  
**Clutching & oil used...**Hinson/DR  
**CHASSIS MODS:**  
**Frame...**Laeger  
**Frame modifications...**Special powder coat black with gold metal flake  
**A-arms & length...**Laeger Pro Trac 50"  
**Swingarm & length...**Laeger  
**Spindles/ball joints/wheel hubs...**Laeger T Pin/DR Billet F. Hubs  
**Steering stabilizer...**Elka  
**SUSPENSION MODS:**  
**Front shocks/travel...**Elka 12"  
**Rear shocks/travel...**Elka 12"  
**Rear linkage...**Laeger CR 500  
**BRAKES:**  
**Brake pads...**Dunlop

**Rotors...**Braking  
**Fluid...**Maxima 550  
**Brake lines...**Crown series  
**TIRES:**  
**Front wheels...**Douglas  
**Front tires...**Goldspeed  
**Rear wheels...**Douglas  
**Rear tires...**Goldspeed  
**SPECS:**  
**Ground clearance...**8"  
**Overall length/width/height...**72"/50"/NA  
**Claimed dry weight...**375 lb.  
**Miscellaneous:** Mods (nerfs/grabbars/-lighting/etc, Trail Tech lights, Vortex X10 CDI, DR Front Bumper, Powdercoated parts, Frame Black w/gold metal flake, gold anodized parts stator cover, W/P Cover, Q/C clutch cover, silencers, Powerhead, grill, caliper, rear chain guards, Nerfbars, bead lock rings Gold plated parts, PTR pipes, bumper, A-Arms, Steering stem, Rear grab bar  
**Sponsors:**  
**Main sponsors**  
 ATV World, Duncan Racing International, Yamaha,  
**Team co-sponsors:** Douglas Wheel, Laeger's, Elka suspension, Team axles, Paul Turner Racing engines, GoldSpeed, Vortex contributing sponsors: Spider, Zip, Works Connection, Pro-Tech UK, Four, Blur, Motion Pro, G-UK, Vitargo, Zip, IMS, Pro Design, Hinson, Dunlop, Maxima, Trail Tech.

other guys on the track at the same time. With the high overtaking speeds, its scary not knowing where a guy's going to go in a turn. So passing is a bit hairy at this event."

#### NOT THEIR YEAR

A rain storm left the track muddy and slick. Not exactly favorable to the Banshee's overall demeanor. "We had a less than good start and a few troubles early on," said Eichner.

The ground was soaked due to heavy rainfall just hours before the start and because of the track conditions, the Banshee got drowned in water puddles. By the second lap Doug was out of the top 100. The bike struggled under the excessive wet conditions and had to be pitted five extra times during the course of the first session to clean mud from the machine and radiator. It boiled all the water out of the radiator three times but the motor kept running. John and Doug kept racing hard and after three hours worked their way back up to 30th overall and five laps down from the leaders.

#### NIGHT RIDER

"My co-rider John Mitchell and I run really well at night. I think it's easier to go fast at night [laughs] besides you don't see the things that might make you slow up during the day [more laughter]."

"This year, though, because it was muddy, the lights we ran on the Banshee were small, because of the lack of a battery. They got muddied up and you have a hard time seeing. Strangely enough, I ran lap times that were almost as fast at night as in the day."

John Mitchell had initially ridden the first two legs of this session going from light into dusk and cleared a lot of traffic. This gave Doug a clear run and by the end of the session, Team Duncan Racing/ATV World had not only won the night session but closed within one lap of the overall leaders, an amazing achievement.

# PONT DE VAUX BANSHEE

## SHEARED KEY ON A BANSHEE

John Mitchell started the four-hour final session in fifth place and totally dominated proceedings, picking off the top riders until he was one lap in front of everybody else. With just one hour to go in the race Doug and John were in the overall lead. Starting the 11th hour, their Banshee, which until now had been faultless, ran into trouble and started to run poorly.

At the pit stop the team identified the problem as a broken flywheel woodruff key. Believing the quad to be race ready John went out to finish the race only to have the problem reoccur and end up having to push the machine half a mile back to the pits.

After replacing the key with a new one, Mitchell went back out for the last 45 minutes and made some important overtakes. The final lap approached and John had made it up to 18th place.

Although the Duncan/ATV World race team was disappointed with the result they were pleased with an overall fifth place and only eight laps down. John and Doug spent 12 (extra) laps in the pits over the course of the 12-hour race. Well, there's always next year... □